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Reported are the responses of 27 Associated Community Teams (ACT) Harlem Domestic Peace Corpsmen to an interview following their training (18 consecutive days) to prepare them to work as assistant teachers in the After School Project in the autumn of 1964. Personal data on the Corpsmen and their responses to various questions about the tutoring program and their training are given. (EF)

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# RESPONSE OF THE 1964-65 HARLEM DOMESTIC PEACE CORPSMEN TO THE PROGRAM: BLOC I

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# I N T R O D U C T I O N

The fall 1964 training program of ACT's Harlem Domestic Peace Corps was divided into three groups, generally referred to as blocs -- a bloc is a group of people who began training at the same time. Training programs, schedules and assignments varied for each bloc. Bloc I, the trainees preparing for the After School Project, had 18 consecutive days of training (9/21 - 10/10). Bloc II, composed of Corpsmen for After School Project and Internal Staff Aides, trained for 6 consecutive days (10/26 - 10/31) plus 7 week ends (ending 12/19/64).

Bloc III was divided into four subdivisions -- School Project, Agencies Project, Internal Staff Aides and Block Association Project. Like Block I, they had 18 consecutive days of training, with the exception of the School Project Trainees who had 6 consecutive days (11/9 - 11/14) plus 1 additional day (11/21). A small group of Internal Staff Aides had on-the-job training only.

The Research Department, in its ongoing evaluation activities, interviewed the first bloc of Corpsmen after they had completed a period of on-the-job experience.

They were asked about their reactions to many aspects of the program. The report on the responses of Bloc I follows.

Plans are underway for interviewing members of the other blocs.

Characteristics OF CORPSMEN

Bloc I, composed of 35 Corpsmen, was asked to come to ACT's headquarters to be interviewed. Of the 35 Corpsmen contacted, 27 responded -- the other 8 did not appear. The interviews were held on 11/23,12/22, and 12/31, and conducted by the Research Staff of ACT. The following discussion relates to the 27 Corpsmen who were interviewed.

In responding to the questions many of the Corpsmen gave multiple answers. Thus, responses often outnumber respondents.

The mean age of this group was 22, with some as young as 17 and others as old as 40. A few of these Corpsmen were college graduates; others had some college training; all but one were high school graduates.

EDUCATION OF CORPSMEN:

| | |
|---|---|
| College graduation | 3 |
| Some College | 6 |
| High school graduation | 16 |
| Some High School | 1 |
| No answer | 1 |
| TOTAL RESPONSES | 27 |

The Corpsmen seemed to like and enjoy their work. While most said, "I like it," or "like it very much," others responded in greater detail such as, ".... I always like to help people and this gives me a chance to help the children." One comment was, "I like the work very much, but we could be doing much more if we were all doing the same thing. The same thing (training) should have been done with the teachers. It is not a case of not doing but of not knowing."

| | |
|---|---|
| Like work very much | 21 |
| Like work (with reservations) | 4 |
| Find work interesting and different | 2 |
| TOTAL RESPONSES | 27 |

HARLEM DOMESTIC PEACE CORPS ASSIGNMENT

In response to the question, "What do you do on your HDPC assignment," virtually all Corpsmen reported teaching reading and math and using SRA material. A few mentioned additional subjects, including teaching Negro History, trips related to the culture of the Negro people, and Saturday cultural programs at their own centers. There were also a number of miscellaneous reports such as: Helping with kindergarten children, assignments to a handicapped child, planning reading programs, testing, helping with the personal problems, and clerical work.

FUNCTIONS OF CORPSMEN

| | |
|---|---|
| Remedial Reading | 16 |
| Teaching Math | 5 |
| Using SRA Material | 13 |
| Negro history | 3 |
| Saturday program | 4 |
| Miscellaneous | 14 |
| TOTAL RESPONSES | 55 |

Virtually all Corpsmen claimed that they worked 12 hours a week. They are supervised, they said, by teachers. While some said they had two supervisors, a few said they were not sure who their supervisors were.

| | |
|---|---|
| Work 12 hours | 25 |
| Work 20 hours | 1 |
| Work 13 hours | 1 |
| TOTAL RESPONSES | 27 |

SUPERVISORS AS PERCEIVED BY CORPSMEN

| | |
|---|---|
| Director of the Center | 2 |
| Teacher | 13 |
| More than one teacher | 8 |
| Unclear who supervisor is | 4 |
| TOTAL RESPONSES | 27 |

PROBLEMS WITH ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM AS PERCEIVED BY THE CORPSMEN

While a few Corpsmen said they had no problems at all, the majority mentioned a variety of administrative and organizational problems -- all similar in tenor and tone. One Corpsmen had this to say. "The major area in which administration has fallen down is in recruiting the children. I understood that we were to go to centers where children had already been recruited. This was not so. We were obliged to go out into the community and do our own recruiting. This was unfortunate because we had no way of knowing whether the kids we were getting were the ones who really needed our help."

One of the areas that had considerable heat was the temporary policy of issuing checks on Saturday -- instead of Friday -- after the Cultural Enrichment series. One corpsmen put it this way, "If checks can't be ready then tell us ahead of time --treated like children. Instead of paying on Friday we're paid after the meeting on Saturday. Pay on a different schedule."

That 12 Corpsmen mentioned "late checks" as a problem may be due to the fact that the phrase "... like getting checks on time," was embodied in the question about problems.

PROBLEMS MENTIONED BY CORPSMEN

| | |
|---|---|
| Late checks | 12 |
| No problem at all | 7 |
| Inadequate & late supplies | 6 |
| Poor communication (staff & Corpsmen) | 6 |
| Not treated like adults | 4 |
| Conflict between Corpsmen and teachers | 2 |
| Not told Saturday attendance to Cultural series was compulsory | 2 |
| Difficulty in making Saturday program | 2 |
| Difficulty in bring in time sheet | 1 |
| TOTAL RESPONSES | 42 |

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM

As pointed out above the Corpsmen have made a number of criticisms. They seemed to see the resolution of these problems as a means of improving the administration of the HDPC program. For example, one Corpsman said, "Better cooperation between the Educational Department and HDPC .... See that information reaches us on time. More planning and guidance at the beginning of the center's program. Seeing that the teachers are trained -- as are the Corpsmen -- to the aims and obligations of HDPC."

## CORPSMEN'S SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

| | |
|---|---|
| Improve communication between staff and Corpsmen | 7 |
| Eliminate hold up of checks | 4 |
| Corpsmen should be drawn together more often | 2 |
| More planning & guidance for teachers | 2 |
| Better communication between Corpsmen and teachers | 2 |
| Improve communication among staff | 2 |
| Fewer liaison people | 1 |
| Better communication between HDPC and Education | 1 |
| More planning and guidance for Corpsmen | 1 |
| More equipment | 1 |
| Better organization of supply lines | 1 |
| Better in-service training | 1 |
| More work in reading problems | 1 |
| Cover emotional problems in training curriculum | 1 |
| TOTAL RESPONSES | 27 |

## ASSESSMENT OF TRAINING

Twenty-five Corpsmen claimed that they attended the full 3-week training period. The other two said they attended all but half of one session. The majority found the training very

useful in preparing them for their assignments.

| | |
|---|---|
| Very useful | 14 |
| Useful | 10 |
| Not useful at all | 1 |
| No answer | 2 |
| TOTAL RESPONSES | 27 |

PARTS OF TRAINING PROGRAM MOST HELPFUL

Respondents were asked what parts of the program they found most helpful in preparing them for their assignments. Claiming the program as helpful they mentioned the following subjects.

| | |
|---|---|
| Methods of teaching | 14 |
| Group dynamics, role playing, depth study | 14 |
| Sociological and psychological aspects of the training | 5 |
| Subject matter; SRA material; phonic studies | 4 |
| TOTAL RESPONSES | 37 |

PARTS OF TRAINING LEAST USEFUL

On the other hand, most of the Corpsmen said, generally, that the lectures were least useful in preparing them for their assignments. While some expressed difficulty in relating them (the lectures) to the task at hand, others found them too long, boring and repetitious. For example, one Corpsman had this to say, "A lot of those lectures were

a waste of time. Some were good; some were not what we were here for. We had a lecture on desegrated schools and that was not in keeping with what we came for... they did not hold the interest of the group." Another Corpsman put it this way. "That's a difficult question. We had a lot to learn in three weeks and going so fast I don't thing we got the full understanding. Some lectures were too long and boring. The long lectures that had little or nothing to do with our training. I don't want to mention names, but Mr. ____ was doing a survey of schools. He showed us how he solved it. But nobody agreed with him. So this had no purpose for us."

LEAST USEFUL PARTS OF TRAINING

| | |
|---|---|
| Lectures | 15 |
| Depth study, middle class values | 2 |
| Group discussions | 1 |
| Group dynamics | 1 |
| Saturday Cultural Program | 1 |
| SRA material | 1 |
| All were useful | 1 |
| No answer | 5 |
| TOTAL RESPONSES | 27 |

ESPECIALLY INTERESTING PARTS OF PROGRAM

In response to the question, "Were there some parts of the training program you found interesting, whether they were useful or not?", the Corpsmen mentioned a variety of subjects. Most mentioned group dynamics, role playing and depth study.

One Corpsman said, "Discussions with fellow Corpsmen and an opportunity to work closely with people of different backgrounds." Another said that group dynamics brought about better inter-relations among the Corpsmen and gave them an opportunity to hear each other's ideas, adding, "...it even prepared me for my sociology class." Still another Corpsmen said that while the lectures were least useful they were interesting, giving a general picture of the community and its problems.

INTERESTING FEATURES OF TRAINING

| | |
|---|---|
| Group dynamics, depth study, role playing | 19 |
| Lectures | 6 |
| Irrelevant responses | 4 |
| Interaction with fellow Corpsmen, visits from staff, and field trips | 4 |
| Discussion of the problems of the Negro people | 1 |
| Total responses | 34 |

MORALE

While some of the Corpsmen thought morale was good during the training session, others felt that it varied. They mentioned a number of factors as contributing to morale during training. Verbatum responses follow:

> "Every one seemed very enthusiastic and eager for the next meeting."
>
> "We were pretty determined and eager to get to work. There was a good deal of dissatisfaction with the training program. It (morale) fluctuated depending on whether the topic and presentation captured interest."
>
> "Very bad, seemed to be very tense between Corpsmen and speakers...got worst after staff fired 30 Corpsmen--they (Corpsmen) thought it unfair."

CORPSMEN'S MORALE DURING TRAINING

| | |
|---|---|
| Very good | 9 |
| Varied | 8 |
| Good | 4 |
| Normal | 2 |
| Bad | 2 |
| Very bad | 2 |
| TOTAL RESPONSES | 27 |

CONFIDENCE ABOUT ASSIGNMENT

With the exception of five Corpsmen who anticipated problems related to dicipline and with the administration of SRA material, virtually all Corpsmen claimed that they felt prepared and confident in approaching their new assignment. Of those who were not confident, the problem was resolved with the cooperation of the teachers.

| | |
|---|---|
| Confident and assured | 22 |
| Unsure | 5 |
| TOTAL RESPONSES | 27 |

MAJOR SATISFACTIONS WITH ASSIGNMENT

In response to the question, "...what do you like best about your HDPC assignment," 23 Corpsmen mentioned "children." Their attitudes towards the children were developed and expressed in different ways such as: "Working with the children. When I first started they (the children) had no confidence. We showed them that they could read, that they could do math... All they needed was someone to help them. We've had great progress." "Working with the children. For people who are supposed to be deprived they really care about themselves -- really want to learn. The program should be greatly expanded."

"The children that I work with and the people I work with in HDPC are making a significant attempt to solve a problem that cannot be attacked by demonstrations. And this is important in attempting to find some of the answers. I

find it hard to stay in school and teach too. But if I had to give up one I do not know which it could be -- both are very important."

While 23 said they found satisfaction from working with the children, other Corpsmen expressed fulfillment of other needs. e.g. feelings of confidence, gaining experience.

| | |
|---|---|
| Working with the children | 23 |
| Gaining experience | 2 |
| Feelings of confidence | 1 |
| Working with variety of age groups | 1 |
| Teaching older children | 1 |
| Like responsibility | 1 |
| TOTAL RESPONSES | 29 |

An awareness of and dedication to the needs of the children - expressed by some of the Corpsmen - seem to suggest the concept: The children need help; the Corpsmen fulfill this need. Through the process of mutual aid, both Corpsmen and children gain and develop.

One Corpsmen said, in reference to his assignment that he liked "...just being with the children - learning to help and understand them. If there were more hours to participate I would gladly do so."

# A P P E N D I X

| BLOC NO. | ASSIGNMENT | JOB DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|
| I | a. After School Project | Located in various community centers where Corpsmen are assigned to work as assistant teachers under the supervision of licensed teachers. They provide indicidual group tutoring - primarily in reading and math and assist in the testing program. |
| II | a. After School Project | Same as above |
| | b.Internal Staff Aides | Are assigned to various departments with ACT - as assistants to staff members. |
| III | a.School Project | Same As II A |
| | b.Internal Staff Aides | In-School Program - 20 hours/week Assistant teachers; will under supervision, assist teachers and /or librarians to provide more meaningful learning situations. They will service students' individually and in small-groups in academic skills and co-curricula activities. |
| | c.Agencies Project | Located in various hospitals and community centers where the Corpsmen aide and assist psychiatrist and social workers. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| III | d. Block Association | A voluntary organization of residents within a geographical subdivision of a city, in which the Corpsmen's role is to help - the members of theBlock Association articulate certain fundamental concerns such as juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, housing violations, etc. |
| IV | Internal Staff with on-the-job training. | Are assigned to various departments with ACT - as assistants to staff members. |